IN THE CLAIMS

The following claim set replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.-24. Previously canceled.

25.-34. Canceled.

35. (New) A method for the prevention and/or treatment of disorders connected with intestinal development, cancerous processes, inflammatory and apoptosic processes of the intestine and its associated structures, disorders connected with cholesterol synthesis, disorders due to the hydrophobic nature of the surfaces of the gastrointestinal tract, allergic disorders of the gastro-intestinal tract, disorders relating to digestive processes, acute inflammatory intestinal diseases, polyposis, (in particular) familial polyposis, infections with *Helicobacter pylori,* disorders of neonatal growth, disorders connected with intestinal homeostasis and diseases of the central and peripheral nervous systems comprising orally or parenterally administering to a subject in need of same a composition comprising a prophylactic or therapeutic amount of alkaline sphingomyelinase.

36. (New) The method according to Claim 35, wherein the composition is administered to a child in the form of a pediatric dietary supplement.

37. (New) The method according to Claim 35, wherein the composition is administered, in combination with artificial milk, condensed milk, soybean milk, powdered milk, partially humanized milk or a baby food.

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38. (New) The method according to Claim 35, wherein the alkaline sphingomyelinase is of bacterial origin, and the bacteria containing the alkaline sphingomyelinase are selected from non-pathogenic Gram-positive bacteria, Gram-negative bacteria and lactic acid bacteria, or from mixtures thereof.

39. (New) The method according to Claim 38, wherein the lactic acid bacteria are selected from the group comprising *Lactobacillus acidophilus, Lactobacillus brevis, Lactobacillus buchneri, Lactobacillus casei, Lactobacillus catenaforme, Lactobacillus cellobiosus, Lactobacillus crispatus, Lactobacillus curvatus, Lactobacillus delbrueckii, Lactobacillus fermentum, Lactobacillus jensenii, Lactobacillus leichmannii, Lactobacillus minutus, Lactobacillus plantarum, Lactobacillus rogosae, Lactobacillus salivarius, Bifidobacterium adolescentis, Bifidobacterium angulatum, Bifidobacterium bifidum, Bifidobacterium breve, Bifidobacterium catenulatum, Bifidobacterium dentium, Bifidobacterium eriksonii, Bifidobacterium infantis, Bifidobacterium longum, Bifidobacterium plantarum, Bifidobacterium pseudocatenulatum, Bifidobacterium pseudolongum, Streptococcus lactis, Streptococcus raffinolactis* and *Streptococcus thermophilus.*

40. (New) The method according to Claim 38, wherein the bacteria is a *Lactobacillus brevis* CD2 strain Accession No. DSM 11,988 ~~is used~~.

41. (New) The method according to Claim 38, wherein the lactic acid bacteria are used in the composition as live, lyophilized or sonicated bacteria.

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42. (New) The method according to Claim 38, wherein from 1×10^2 to 1×10^{13} CFUs of lactic acid bacteria are used per gram of composition.

43. (New) The method according to Claim 39, wherein 200×10^9 *Streptococcus thermophilus*, 150×10^9 Bifidobacteria and 4×10^9 *Lactobacillus acidophilus* are used per gram of composition.

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